

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2002

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Nuclear Posture Review

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our growing concern at the posture being taken by the United States with regard to our nation's nuclear arsenal. We are especially disturbed by reports that the United States is putting a high priority on the development of usable lower-yield nuclear weapons and would consider using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. These policies send a clear but misguided message that our nation is renewing its commitment to weapons of mass destruction at the same time it seeks to keep such weapons out of the hands of terrorists. We fear that this posture will spark a new arms race with chilling consequences on both national and global security.

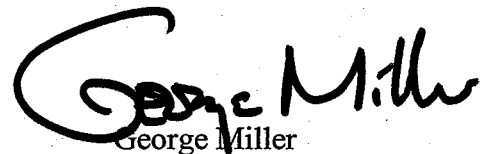
Instead of working with Russia to drastically reduce the number of strategic nuclear weapons in our arsenal, reports indicate that your administration places a high priority on the development of a new, usable, lower-yield nuclear weapon. Development of a "mini-nuke" would undermine decades of nonproliferation efforts by signaling that nuclear weapons are legitimate war-fighting tools rather than deterrents to aggression. We are especially concerned by the prospect of having mini-nukes in our arsenal because along with the lower yield comes a lower threshold for its use. Any first use of a nuclear device by the United States would invite every other current or aspiring nuclear nation to follow our lead.

We are also alarmed by reports that the United States is preparing contingency plans to use nuclear weapons against nations that do not possess them. By warning hostile nations that they will suffer the ultimate consequence—the use of a nuclear weapon against their citizens—if they threaten the United States or its allies, the administration claims to be acting in the interests of national security. But such aggressive rhetoric actually increases the danger. Threatening potentially dangerous—but still non-nuclear—nations with our nuclear weapons is not the way to convince them to abandon their own nuclear weapons programs. Rather, such threats will only strengthen their resolve to build their own nuclear arsenal.

As a ratifier of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the United States is legally bound to move toward accomplishing the total abolition of nuclear weapons. Backing non-nuclear states into a corner and moving forward with battlefield nuclear weapons are both steps in the wrong direction. We seek an unequivocal statement that your administration will neither consider using a nuclear weapon on a non-nuclear state nor develop a lower-yield nuclear weapon.

Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey

  
George Miller

Barney Frank

Barney Frank

Eni Faleomavaega

Eni F.H. Faleomavaega

Alice L. Hastings

Alice L. Hastings

Cynthia A. McKinney

Cynthia A. McKinney

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee

Jim McGovern

Jim McGovern

Jose Serrano

Jose Serrano

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin

Sheila Jackson-Lee

Sheila Jackson-Lee

Peter DeFazio

Peter DeFazio

Dale Kildee

Dale Kildee

James L. Oberstar

James L. Oberstar

Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown

Maurice Hinchey

Maurice Hinchey

Lane Evans

Lane Evans

Sam Farr

Sam Farr

Bob Filner

Bob Filner

Lynn Rivers

Lynn Rivers

Maxine Waters

Maxine Waters

Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch

Rush Holt

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Lynn Woolsey

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Joseph M. Hoeffel

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John Tierney

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